

# ON CALL

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## Education is "Tons of Fun"

By Jennifer Conley Sexton  
Volunteer/Marketing Coordinator

Roanoke County Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism along with Roanoke County Department of Economic Development and Tanglewood Mall offered "Tons of Fun" - a fantastic day of free fun for children on Saturday, February 4, 2006, from 10 AM to 4 PM at Tanglewood Mall.

This 7th annual event had all your favorites such as, life-size chess, balloon sculptures, a caricature artist, face painting, clowns, inflatable fun, rides and games, and of course who can forget the lovable costume characters such as Spot, the Roanoke County Fire and Rescue Safety Dog.

The Roanoke County Fire & Rescue Fire Marshal's office participated in "Tons of Fun" day and had well... tons of

fun. Free fire and life safety activity coloring books were given to each child who stopped by our booth. Balloon sculptures were made by our multi-talented prevention team and a fire safety message was discussed with each child. On top of that, Spot, the Roanoke County Fire and Rescue Safety Dog was on hand to visit with the children. A great event to remind children about the importance of always being safe.



PHOTO BY JENNIFER SEXTON

*Fire Investigator Brian Simmons talks about the importance of "knowing two ways out of every room" while making a balloon sculpture for a young Roanoke County resident.*



PHOTO BY BETH DALTON

*Kobey Simon visits with Spot, the Roanoke County Fire & Rescue Safety Dog.*



PHOTO BY JENNIFER SEXTON

*Fire Inspector Scott Jones shows Mason Huffman some magic while discussing the importance of never playing with matches.*

# A Message from Chief Richard E. Burch, Jr.

As we begin 2006 and look to the opportunities ahead, it is fitting to look backwards at the accomplishments the department has made over the past year. We are fortunate to have several major successes that ultimately mean improvements or enhancements for those we serve.

The first area of improvement involves our response apparatus. Through a purchasing agreement, the department placed five new replacement fire apparatus in service resulting in state-of-the-art equipment at our stations, ready to respond to any call for service. These apparatus replaced units that were older technology and beginning to be a concern when repairs were needed as many parts were obsolete.

In addition, the department placed in service two new ambulances with a third ambulance currently on order whose purchase cost will be split with the Town of Vinton. Again these newer vehicles afford updated technology and reliability.

Thanks to a grant from the Department of Homeland Security, our department was also able to purchase and place in service a unique firefighting vehicle which is specifically designed to enable responses into wooded areas of the County. This unit is smaller than traditional engines, four-wheel drive, and comes equipped with foam technology to quickly extinguish fires.

A new feature implemented in our ambulances during the past year is the EMS data reporting system. As you may see if you have a need for medical assistance, our personnel have now replaced the former practice of completing paperwork with electronic forms. Each ambulance carries a durable laptop that is now used to record patient information, medical procedures used, and the forms necessary for patient signatures. Instead of signing a paper, the patient will sign on the laptop much like the electronic devices used by parcel delivery services and retail stores. This technology affords

a more accurate and expedient means of compiling the necessary information from the incident.

Another technology related improvement is the implementation of a new Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and Records Management System (RMS) program. The CAD system is used in the 9-1-1 center to dispatch incidents throughout the County. Additionally, the new system has enhanced reporting via the RMS software that will enable all of the public safety providers (Police, Fire, and EMS) to have access to more detailed statistical and historical data. This system was implemented early but purchased in conjunction with the new public safety building being constructed. The new building is



*A paramedic records patient information on the county's new EMS Data Reporting System*

expected to be completed in the spring of 2007.

Also related to improved technology and the completion of the new building is the purchase of the new radio paging system. It is through this system that emergency responders are notified of an incident requiring their response. The current technology is outdated and becoming obsolete so the implementation of this new system is critical to continued operations. This system is nearing completion and should be ready sometime this summer.

In other areas, homeland security and related training continue to be a priority. Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, the need for preparedness and increased

training levels has skyrocketed. As a department, we need to be better prepared for the future. We do face challenges on the horizon such as the possible pandemic of the bird flu that is so prevalent in the news today. We are doing everything possible to make sure that we have procedures in place to handle this situation should these fears become a reality.

Also related to preparedness, I have been appointed to serve on the National Mutual Aid Task Force committee representing the Southeastern Association of Fire Chiefs. This committee was formed following the hurricane disaster along the Gulf Coast and is tasked with developing recommendations for response plans to ensure that responders are ready should similar situations occur in the future.

Finally, we are very proud to report that our department has again been honored to receive a Governor's Fire Service Award. This year the award goes to Gary Huffman, Roanoke County Fire Marshal, for his efforts in the Virginia Public Fire and Life Safety Education category. This is the fifth Governor's award the department has received in the past four years, including the Governor's Award for EMS Call of the Year for the response we made in the Catawba area that resulted in a field amputation of a man's leg to save his life.

We would like to thank the Board of Supervisors and County Administration for their support without which none of these accomplishments could have been realized. Our success is also not possible without the men and women who provide these services everyday. We are indeed fortunate to have such expertise and dedication within our department.

All in all, it has been a very busy year with many successes, all of which will benefit our citizens either directly or indirectly. It is our pleasure to provide fire and rescue services to the County and as always, we will strive to make additional progress during the current year.



# Roanoke County Fire & Rescue receives 2005 Governor's Award For Outstanding EMS Call Of The Year

**By Jennifer Conley Sexton**  
Volunteer/Marketing Coordinator

Roanoke County Fire and Rescue Department has been awarded *EMS Outstanding Call of the Year* for leading an interagency effort that saved a Catawba man's life after his leg was so badly entangled in a tractor auger that it had to be amputated. Chief Richard E. Burch, and EMS Battalion Chief Dustin Campbell, incident commander accepted this esteemed award at the 2005 EMS Symposium in Norfolk, Virginia earlier this year.

The incident for which the award was presented began in the morning hours of January 1, 2005 in the pastures of a Catawba farm. A 38 year old man somehow got his leg so terribly entangled in a power take off unit (PTO) drive shaft powering an auger on a tractor that the only way to save his life was to remove his leg. The seamless interagency effort made on this day allowed this man to live to tell about his amputation in a Catawba pasture.

After Roanoke County Fire and Rescue provided critical patient assessment and treatment through the coordination of numerous assisting agencies the man was flown to Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital where he underwent surgery for the formal amputation of his leg. As of today, the patient is back at home

and doing very well.

This tremendous incident involved preserving life through the coordination of multiple emergency medical agencies. Those involved included Roanoke County Fire & Rescue Department, Catawba/Masons Cove Volunteer Rescue Squad, Masons Cove Volunteer Fire Company, Catawba Volunteer Fire Company, Med-Flight III (Virginia State Police Helicopter), Sydney Vail, MD-Carilion Trauma Surgeon, Ted Georges, MD, and Julie Georges, RN.

Late last year, the agencies involved were also recognized by the Western Virginia Emergency Medical Services Council for the same call and extraordinary efforts made to save this man's life.

Additionally, The Roanoke Valley Chapter of the Red Cross presented all agencies involved with their Emergency Medical Hero Award at their annual Celebration of Heroes Breakfast. The Breakfast was held in February and representatives from each agency were honored with a breakfast and a specially designed award.



PHOTO BY JENNIFER CONLEY SEXTON

Chief Richard E. Burch, Jr. (middle) and EMS Battalion Chief Dustin Campbell (right) accept the 2005 Governor's Award for Outstanding EMS Call of the Year from Scott Winston, Assistant Director of OEMS.



PHOTO BY JENNIFER CONLEY SEXTON

Boxley Materials representative (l) presents Med-Flight Helicopter Pilot, Don Childs (back left), Chief Richard Burch (m) and Carilion Trauma Surgeon Sidney Vail with the Emergency Medical Responder Hero Award at the annual Celebration of Heroes Breakfast.

# Roanoke County Fire Marshal receives his second Governor's Award for Excellence

By Jennifer Conley Sexton  
Volunteer/Marketing Coordinator

Governor Tim M. Kaine selected Gary D. Huffman, Fire Marshal of Roanoke County to receive the Governor's 2005 Virginia Fire Services Award for Excellence in Virginia Fire & Life Safety Education. The Award was presented on Friday, February 24, 2006 during the Opening Ceremonies of the 2006 Virginia Fire Chiefs Association's Mid-Atlantic Expo & Symposium in Virginia Beach.

Captain Huffman was selected because he exemplifies outstanding dedication and service for the furtherance of Virginia Public Fire & Life Safety Education. Huffman and the Fire Marshal's office that he leads are dedicated to providing fire and life safety to not only Roanoke County Citizens but also citizens throughout the Commonwealth. The following are just some of Huffman's educational initiatives that his office accomplished over the past year:

## 1. **Character Academy Pilot Project -**

The Roanoke County Fire Marshal's Office in conjunction with field personnel hosted a one-day pilot program called Character Academy # 1. This was a one-day Academy during the summer of 2005 designed to teach our youth between the ages of 10 - 15 about the fire and rescue service, while earning about the importance of character. What better way to learn about character then to hang out with people who fight fire and save lives.

## 2. **Thousands Educated at local Professional Baseball Game**

This past Summer, Captain Gary Huffman worked with our local Class-A professional baseball club, the Salem Avalanche (affiliates of the Houston Astros) to produce an educational theme night that would educate our youth throughout the valley about fire and life safety. The theme created was "Back to School Night at the Salem Avalanche with Roanoke County Fire and Rescue".



PHOTO BY DUSTIN CAMPBELL

Chief Richard E. Burch, Jr. (l) congratulates Captain Gary Huffman for receiving his second Governor's Award for Excellence in Public Fire & Life Safety Education.

Backpacks with the message: "Don't Strike Out- Test Your Smoke Alarm!" were purchased in a joint effort between Roanoke County Fire and Rescue and the Salem Avalanche and given to the first 1000 kids who came through the gate. Stuffed in the back packs were fire and life safety tips for children and adults to read and discuss.

## 3. **10,000 Christmas Tree**

**Safety Tags Delivered to local Tree Farmers** - Christmas trees were the items first ignited in an estimated average of 310 reported U.S home structure fires per year in 1999-2002. These fires caused an average of 14 civilian deaths, 40 civilian injuries, and \$16.2 million in direct property damage per year according to the National Fire Protection Association.

In 2004, Gary Huffman wanted to make sure these statistics did not reflect the Roanoke Valley so he set out to educate each family who purchased a fresh-cut tree in Roanoke County. He did this by creating a safety tag that would be placed on each fresh cut tree sold in Roanoke County. The safety tag would list important safety tips for the consumer. Although the tags were supplied to Roanoke County Christmas tree vendors, we know that these trees end up in houses across the Roanoke Valley and help all citizens to become safer.

The program was such a great success that in 2005 Captain Huffman ordered 10,000 tags to keep up with the demand.

Captain Huffman will tell you that he could not have been selected without the extraordinary staff he is honored to work with. Congratulations to Captain Huffman and the Fire Marshal team.

Special Note: Roanoke County Fire and Rescue has been selected for 6 Governor's Virginia Fire Service Awards for Excellence over the past 4 years.



# Virginia Region VI Heavy & Technical Rescue Team Covers Southwest Virginia

By Riley McClure  
Training Officer

In 2004, Roanoke County Fire and Rescue along with the City of Roanoke Fire-EMS agreed to work together to make the "Regional Heavy and Technical Rescue Team" a reality. The two fire and rescue departments quickly got to work combining efforts and resources. An assessment of personnel and equipment already in use was completed followed by an estimate of what else would be required.

Roanoke County had already received a competitive grant in the prior year from the Department of Justice to purchase a Mass Casualty Unit and a Structural Collapse Trailer. A Mass Casualty Unit is needed when there is a sizeable incident involving more than 10 patients, such as a bus accident, multi-vehicle accident or a structural collapse. The trailer holds the necessary equipment to assist the incident commander with organizing patient care for up to 50 victims. The unit was purchased at a cost of \$35,000. It was the first of its kind in the Roanoke Valley and now Roanoke Fire-EMS has acquired a similar Mass Casualty Trailer to compliment Roanoke County's.

The Structural Collapse Unit was also funded by grant dollars. This funding was awarded from the Office of Domestic Preparedness. Roanoke County Fire and

this unit arrived.

These two specialized units provided the core equipment to get the team started, but additional equipment and training were needed, along with protocol to determine how the team would be organized. More than 150 personnel from the two localities held the minimum required level of technical and operational training. Teams of at least eight trained members including a command officer and a safety officer are able to deploy 24-hours a day within 45 minutes of notification to anywhere in the region.

In January of 2005, the Virginia Department of Fire Programs selected Roanoke County Fire and Rescue along with the City of Roanoke Fire-EMS to serve as the *Roanoke Regional Heavy and Technical Rescue Team* for Division VI. Division VI includes Alleghany County, Bath County, City of Bedford, Bedford County, Botetourt County, City of Buena Vista, Town of Clifton Forge, City of Covington, Craig County, City of Danville, Floyd County, Franklin County, Henry County, Highland County, City of Lexington, City of Martinsville, Montgomery County, Patrick County, Pittsylvania County, City of Roanoke, Roanoke County, Rockbridge County, City of Salem and the Town of Vinton.

The honor also included a grant of \$42,857 for the purchase of additional specialized equipment including hydraulic tools, listening devices, search cameras, lifting devices, bracing materials, evacuation chairs and ventilation fans.

Although the team is operational, additional training is ongoing to hone the skills of personnel from Roanoke County Fire and Rescue and the City of Roanoke Fire-EMS. While no large-scale incidents have occurred, 14 counties, eight cities and two towns are now safer because of this intergovernmental "Heavy and Technical Rescue Team". The Roanoke Regional Heavy and Technical Rescue Team is another example of regionalism at its best.

PHOTOS  
BY RILEY  
MCCLURE

*A Roanoke County Firefighter trains with a Core Drill, used to drill through concrete then put a camera through to see if a victim is on the other side.*

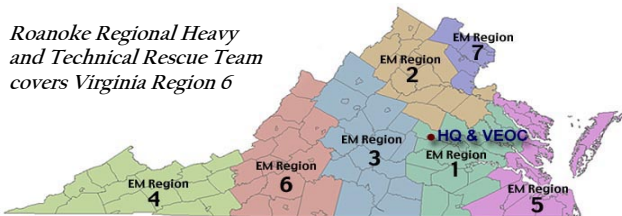


*Firefighters learn how a vacuum stand allows firefighters to hold the core drill in a vertical position while trying to locate a victim trapped under the debris.*



*Firefighters train with concrete saws used to breach sections of collapsed buildings.*

*Roanoke Regional Heavy and Technical Rescue Team covers Virginia Region 6*



Rescue also purchased a structural Collapse Response package recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The price tag on the entire package was \$64,778 and was also purchased from grant dollars received from the Office of Domestic Preparedness (now under Department of Homeland Security). The equipment provides needed resources for the Fire and Rescue Department to adequately respond to a building collapse. The equipment includes specialized tools and shoring equipment not available in the Roanoke Valley before

# Public Safety Center Update

**By Dan O'Donnell**  
Assistant County  
Administrator

Construction has been underway on the new Roanoke County Public Safety Center located off of Cove Road in North County since the spring of 2005. The Police, Fire and Rescue, and Information Technology departments will be headquartered in the new facility, which replaces the aging and cramped 38,000 square foot building on Peters Creek Road. Along with additional space and upgraded security, the facility will house the County's emergency radio system and feature an expanded emergency dispatch center and Emergency

Operations Center.

Northrop Grumman Corporation was awarded the contract to design and build the public safety center in November 2004. Design work for the structure was completed in the spring of 2005, and a groundbreaking ceremony was held on March 22, 2005. Currently, the foundations and structural steel is in place and floors, roofing and ductwork are under construction. The emergency radio system and E-911 dispatch center is scheduled to be relocated to the new facility in November of 2006 with final completion of all systems anticipated to be March, 2007.

## Announcements

Roanoke County Firefighter/Paramedic **Gary Hostetter** was awarded the 2004 Alton G. Miller Firefighter of the Year Award for his efforts in creating "Guns and Hoses", a hockey game between valley firefighters and police officers that raises money for Muscular Dystrophy Association. The first year almost \$7000 was raised and March 12 Roanoke County Professional Firefighters and Paramedics will host the third event at the Roanoke Civic Center.

Roanoke County Firefighter/EMT **Travis Anderson** received the 2005 Alton G. Miller Firefighter of the Year Award from the Roanoke County Professional Firefighters and Paramedics for his work in helping communities (especially firefighters and their families) devastated by Hurricane Katrina. He has made multiple trips to the Gulf Coast to work and bring supplies. He even worked with Roanoke County to provide a city in Mississippi with surplus police cars.

Congratulations to Roanoke County Fire and Rescue Firefighter/EMT's who recently passed the Emergency Medical Technician-Intermediate Class: **Mike Haubner, Matt Bennett, Fran Gonzalez, Jonathon Wacek, Jeremy Edwards and Josh Simmons**. The EMT-I class is 400 hours in duration and students learn advanced emergency procedures including starting IV's, intubating, performing cardiac monitoring, providing advanced cardiac life support and giving medications. Congratulations to these new Paramedic/firefighters on this tremendous accomplishment that will benefit the citizens of Roanoke County.





## Fire & Rescue Volunteers who are receiving their retirement benefit and continue to serve with us

The following Volunteers have reached the Length of Service Awards Program LOSAP retirement age of 55 and are receiving their volunteer retirement benefit, but continue to serve with our organizations. We salute your dedication and commitment to Roanoke County Fire & Rescue. The number listed next to the name refers to the number of LOSAP years accrued by this volunteering, upon reaching retirement age. As mentioned, they still continue to serve RCFRD.

Doug Adams - 20 years  
Ernest Amos-11 years  
Glen Bandy-11 years  
Steven Bandy-20 years  
Jackie Beard-11 years  
Bobby Boone-17 years  
Cecil Boone-11 years  
John Chambliss-10 years  
Melvin Conner-17 years  
Joseph Crowder-20 years  
Norman Darnall-18 years  
Janet Doran-14 years  
James Doran, Sr.-7 years  
Karen Foster-7 years  
Ralph Giles-11 years  
Woody Henderson-20 years

A.C.Hollins-3 years  
Donald Jones-20 years  
John King-20 years  
Sandy Light-8 years  
Larry Logan-9 years  
Judith Mabry-19 years  
Leon Martin -11 years  
John Molumphy-20 years  
Anthony Morisco-17 years  
Jacob Neighbors-20 years  
Raymond Philpott-13 years  
Bennett Powell-20 years  
Harry Offenbacher-15 years  
Patricia Reavis-3 years  
Fred Rector-15 years  
Henry Rice-13 years

Lynne Rice-8 years  
Joseph Rodgers-14 years  
Dean Rorrer-20 years  
Richard Shelly-15 years  
Michael Shorter-13 years  
Danny Sprouse-6 years  
Larry Starkey-20 years  
George Stone-18 years  
Donald Tarter-11 years  
Donald Thomas-19 years  
Roger Vest-19 years  
Sharon Vest-17 years  
Douglas Wirt-11 years  
Frank Wagner-11 years  
Robert Wingfield-20 years

## Become a Volunteer Firefighter or EMT !

We provide training

*Apply at your local Roanoke County Fire/Rescue Station between 7&9 pm*

**or call 561-8060 for more information !**



### Roanoke County Firefighter/EMT Travis Anderson receives Hero Award

A Representative from Cigna Healthcare provides Firefighter/EMT Travis Anderson with the 2005 Red Cross Community Impact Hero Award during the annual breakfast celebration on February 28th at the Clarion. Anderson received this award for his efforts to assist several Mississippi communities after Hurricane Katrina. He used vacation time to visit several communities, delivering truckloads of supplies with him. Additionally, he was able to enlist county administration's help and delivered 3 surplus cars on one trip that were welcomed by the police department and fire department.



## The Roanoke County Fire and Rescue Newsletter

3568 Peters Creek Road, NW  
Roanoke, Virginia 24019

Phone: 540-561-8100 editor  
Fax: 540-561-8108

Editor: Jennifer Conley Sexton

Please send your comments to  
[jconley@roanokecountyva.gov](mailto:jconley@roanokecountyva.gov)

*Check us out  
on the Web  
[www.roanokecountyva.gov](http://www.roanokecountyva.gov)*

# Premiere Fire & Rescue Citizens Academy

**By Gary Huffman**  
Fire Marshal

The first Roanoke County Fire & Rescue Citizens Academy is underway. There are 14 citizens participating in this 10 week instructional and hands on class.

The Citizens Fire & Rescue Academy is a program that provides our citizens with an opportunity to experience some of the training that helps to mold our people into a team that saves lives. Graduates of this academy are not considered to be fire and rescue certified, but all who attend this 10 week event will have a better understanding of what it takes to be a member of the fire and rescue team.

The citizens are learning about the fire & rescue service, equipment that is used, typical situations that our personnel deal with, and the type of people associated with this type of work. The following subjects are covered: Personnel, Personal Protective Gear, Self Contained Breathing Apparatus, Thermal Imaging Camera, Fire Extinguishers, Emergency Medical Services, CPR Certification, Technical Rescue, Prevention, Fire & Rescue Stations and apparatus.

The class meets each Thursday night at the Regional Fire EMS Training Center and is scheduled for graduation on April 27, 2006.

We are proud to provide our citizens with a service that is second to none.



*PHOTOS BY  
JERRY  
SPRADLING*

*Citizens learn  
through classroom  
instruction taught  
by many of our per-  
sonnel.*

*Fire Inspec-  
tor Chris  
Smith dem-  
onstrates the  
proper way to  
use a fire  
extinguisher.*



*With super-  
vision, a  
citizen prac-  
tices using a  
fire extin-  
guisher to  
properly put  
out this con-  
trolled fire.*